

Project I.D. No 168

NAME: Sakamoto, Kakuichi DATE OF BIRTH: 1903 PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima
Age: 74 Sex: M Marital Status: _____ Education: Grammar school 8 yrs.

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1919 Age: 16 M.S.Y.Y. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Schoolboy 2. Mechanic, driver 3. Dry cleaning business
Place of residence: 1. Berkeley 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Tanforan
Name of relocation center: Topaz, Utah
Dispensation of property: Sold store to American Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Cook 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: Japan

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: 1953
Address/es: 1. Berkeley 2. _____
Occupation/s: Gardener
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 1/23/77 Place: Berkeley
Translator: Mabel Hall

S: When my younger sister was around 1 or 2 years old my father came to America alone. A few years later when I was around 6 years old my mother came to America.

Q: Why did your father quit his job at Miyajima?

A: I think he wanted to come to America. His brothers told him that his parents did not want him to go so far away, but as he was young and eager, he decided to come to America.

Q: Did he work for about 5 years after coming to America?

A: No, he worked here until I came here. During that time he went back to Japan once, and stayed there for about half a year.

Q: When was that?

A: I came to America in 1919.

Q: Were you 15 years old then?

A: I was 16. I came here as a yobiyose. I had graduated from junior high then. I wanted to come to America, and my mother wanted me to come and help my father and let him go home, as she had 5 children.

Q: Did your father leave Japan when he was 23 years old?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: Did your mother come to America with him?

A: No, she didn't.

Q: Did they have 5 children by then?

A: Yes, they did.

Q: They married young, didn't they?

A: Yes, they did. No, that was not so. There were two children in Japan. After my mother came here 2 children were born. She took them back to Japan with her. After that another one was born in Japan, so altogether there were 5 children.

Q: Was your mother in America for a while?

A: She lived here for about 5 years.

Q: What did you do while she was in America?

A: My sister and I lived with my grandmother. My mother took two children who were born in America with her to Japan. Then another one was born in Japan. That made five brothers and sisters.

Q: Do you remember the time your mother wasn't with you?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Were you lonely?

A: Yes, of course I was. When I saw my friends with their mothers I longed for my mother. My grandmother used to say when grandfather scolded me for doing something bad, "Don't say such thing. His mother is in America, so be kind to him."

Q: How much education did you have?

A: I graduated from junior highschool after finishing grammar school.

Q: Did you have good time at school?

A: I had fun at school, but as my parents were not with me I felt lonesome when I saw my friends bring their parents to literary exercise or other meetings at school. That is why I wanted my mother to go back to Japan and take care of my brothers. In those days there were many such people. Fathers left mothers and children in Japan, and went to America to work. When they made some money they went back to Japan. In those days there was no such people as permanent settlers. It was the same with us. There was no such freedom as owning land in America those days.

Q: What was your father doing in America?

A: He worked in a laundry.

Q: Where?

A: In Berkeley. He lived in Berkeley for a long time. I lived in Berkeley from 1919 till the war started. I never lived in any other place.

Q: Did your father send money from America every month?

A: Yes, he did. Some people who were living with their mothers in Japan were pressed for money as their fathers did not send money from America. When I heard such stories I thought they were terrible fathers, My father was a very religious man. He was already a member of the Free Methodist Church in 1919, so as soon as I came to America he took me to the church.

Q: Did you come here alone when you were 16 years old?

A: Yes, I came here alone.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was then?

A: I did not have ambition to seek my fortune. I just wanted to work hard. I was only 16 then. I wanted to study English, so after my father went back to Japan I worked as a schoolboy in a white family for about 6 years. I went through much hardships. I became ill once and was hospitalized. I did not have any relations but my guardian took care of me. The master of the house where I was staying as a schoolboy was kind to me.

Q: When you were in Japan did you think America was a good country?

A: Yes, I thought it was a good place as father used to tell me that Americans are good people. I was no scared to come here.

Q: What was your impression of America after you came here?

A: When I came here there was exclusion, so I had a hard time.
I felt inferior at school. There were very few Japanese ^{who were} at school age in those days. There were only 2 or 3 Japanese in a grammar school in Berkeley, Some teachers were good to us.

Q: Where did your ship leave from?

A: From Kobe.

Q: Did you go to Kobe by yourself?

A: My mother took me to Kobe. I cannot forget that time. My mother and her sister who lived in Korea saw me off. When the ship left she could not bare to see me off, so as soon as the gong sounded the departure she disappeared. I looked for her but I could not find her. Later I found out that she left as it was too painful to see me off. I was not the only one; everyone in those days had the same kind of experience. My mother is decaased, but as a father I still think about that time.

Q: Was that in 1919?

A: Yes, it was March in 1919. I came on board the Korea Maru. of Toyo Steamship Company.

Q: Did the ship go to Tokyo from there?

A: It went to Yokohama.

6

Q: Where did it go from there?

A: It came straight to San Francisco. I think it took about 18 days.

Q: What do you remember on board the ship?

A: As I was young, and as it was the first long voyage for me I enjoyed it. There were many young people on board the ship. There were many women going to America as picture brides.

Q: Weren't you about the youngest one?

A: In those days 16 or 17 years old was very young.

Q: Did you ^{talk} to picture brides?

A: Yes, I did. They were older than I. They were over 20 years old. They were wondering ~~how~~ their lives would be in America, and what kind of men their husband would be. From that respect I had my father in America although my mother and sister were in Japan, so I made the voyage with a hope.

Q: Did anything interesting happen on the ship?

A: There were 2 or 3 young men. In those days the ship did not have much facilities, so it was not a very enjoyable voyage..

Q: How was the food?

A: Food was pretty good.

Q: Didn't you get seasick?

A: I did not get seasick as I was raised at Miyajima by the sea.

Q: Did you go fishing when you were in Japan?

A: Yes, I used to go fishing with my grandfather. As I told you before, my father was a religious man and sent us money promptly every month so we could make a living. My mother used to say, "Thanks to your father we can make a living, and send you to school." When I heard about some families not being able to make a living as their fathers dissipated and did not send money, I could not understand why.

Q: Did you go to Angel Island after the ship arrived at San Francisco?

A: Yes, I did. I met my father after many years then.

Q: About how many years you didn't see him?

A: He went back to Japan once and stayed for about half a year.

I don't remember well but I think I had not seen him for 7 or 8 years since then.

Q: How did you feel when you met your father in America?

A: To tell the truth, I was a bit bashful as I hadn't seen him for a long time. Father was a strict man, and ^{sometime} I was scolded, so I wondered if he was still strict.

8

Q: What kind of experience did you have on Angel Island?

A: There wasn't anything difficult in the process of landing.

I just thought I came to a strange place.

Q: Were you kept there overnight?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Were there Chinese there, also?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: Were they with you?

A: I don't remember if they were with us or not.

Q: Did your father come and pick you up?

A: Yes, he did, and I landed right away.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: My father went back to Japan after 3 to 4 years, and I worked as a schoolboy.

Q: Did you live with your father during that time?

A: Yes, I did until he went back to Japan.

Q: Did you go to school after that?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Did you go to school after that?

A: Yes, I did. My father told me that I cannot learn English staying with him, so I should live in a white family and study English. He took me to the white family where he used to work. He did not have education as he had many brothers and sisters. He had to support the family so he knew hardships.

Q: Did you go to school working as a schoolboy?

A: Yes, I did. As a schoolboy I got up in the morning and cleaned the house, and prepared breakfast for the family. After the master went to work I washed dishes, packed my lunch and went to school.

Q: Did you learn how to cook?

A: Yes, I did. My father taught me how to cook, saying that to learn how to cook is part of the training to be a schoolboy.

Q: How did you feel when you first lived in a white family?

A: It was not a happy life at first. People born in Japan felt ashamed to work in somebody's house, and I felt so, too. I did not feel good to clean the house or the toilet, so I ^{em}remember crying once in a while. In those days all young people who came to America and wanted to study lived in white families. They all worked hard.

Q: Did you make any mistake in the white family?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What kind of mistake did you make?

A: I didn't know how to cook. At one time I threw away the bones from the ^{oa} ~~ra~~st, not knowing that the bones were used to make soup with. My father came and told me that it was a mistake that my mistress didn't tell me, but at such a time I should ask if I should throw away the bone or not. I learned to cook in a short time.

Q: Did you learn English fast?

A: It took me a long time to learn English. I lived in the white family to learn English fast. My master used to tell me, "Your father let you work in my house to learn English, so if I don't understand anything be free to ask." As soon as I came home from school, the mistress used to teach me English from the alphabet. At that time I thought Americans are kind people as they teach me English for hours free.of charge.

Q: Were thye young people or old people?

A: They were ^{both} young people.in their 30s. While I was in school for 6 years I changed jobs 4 or 5 times. Some homes were good and some were bad, but most of the homes I worked were good. The reason was that the homes my father found jobs for me were Christian families. In those days everybody had hard times.

When I see young Japanese come to church I tell them, "You are lucky to be able to speak in Japanese. People before ynu paved the way for you. In my days people who came before us were men with families who came here to work and not to study."

11

Q: Did you feel helpless when your father said he was going back to Japan?

A: Yes, of course I felt helpless. But on the other hand I remember my mother asked me to send my father home as my brothers would feel inferior if father was in America for a long time. People in those days worked hard.

Q: Were you around 20 when your father went back to Japan?

A: I was not 20 yet.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: I worked as a schoolboy for 6 years. I went till the second year in highschool. In those days not many Japanese went to highschool, and Niseis born in America were not old enough to go to highschool. That is why I had a very lonely schooldays, but there were some white people who were good to us. In those days there were 14 or 15 Japanese in Berkeley Highschool. I quit school and worked. Before that I attended a technical college in Oakland for about half a year to study automotive engineering, and worked in an automobile company for about half a year. When I was 26 years old I went back to Japan and married my wife.

Q: Did you save money while you worked as a mechanic?

A: I worked as a mechanic for 6 months and saved money. Then I went back to Japan and brought my wife back with me.

Q: How did you find your wife?

A: My father picked her. In those days not everybody could come to America.

Q: What year was it?

A: It was 1931.

Q: Did you go back to Japan and brought your wife with you here?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Wasn't it around the Depression?

A: Oh, yes it was. When I came back from Japan I could not find a job as the automobile company discharged its employees because of the Depression. Then I worked as a truck driver of a dry cleaning store.

Q: Was it a white^{dry} cleaner?

A: No, a Japanese^{dry} cleaner. Then I worked as a truck driver of a wholesale nursery delivering flowers to department stores in San Francisco. I think I did that for about 3 months.

Q: Did the work last only 3 months?

A: I changed to another job after 3 month. Shortly after that I started my own cleaning business.

Q: Were there many Japanese in cleaning business?

A: Yes, there were many Japanese in laundry and cleaning business.

Q: What year did you start the cleaning business?

A: I worked in a cleaners for about 3 years. Then I started the business with a partner. A few years later the war broke out.

Q: Was the cleaning business pretty good?

A: It was during the Depression, but it was better than other business. After the war broke out we leased machines and building in which we invested money, and went to camp.

Q: What kind of headaches did you have while you were in dry cleaning business?

A: The building belonged to a white widow, but the partner and I built the building.

Q: How was the business?

A: There was the Depression, but the business was not too bad.

Q: What kind of ^{worries} ~~worries~~ did you have as a dry cleaner?

A: As we used gasoline, and as the shop was in downtown Berkeley we had to be careful. Some neighbors complained, and I didn't blame them.

Q: Was the shop in the Japanese neighborhood?

A: No, it was in the white neighborhood. There was no Japanese.

Q: Did you get persecuted by the whites in the neighborhood?

A: No, never. They were quite nice to us.

Q: Did you say it was in Berkeley?

A: Yes, it was in Berkeley. People in Berkeley were good to Japanese than other cities as Berkeley ^{was} is the base of education and there were many pro-Japanese people. At the time of evacuation Dr. Guy and Dr. Johnson who were pro-Japanese were good to us. That is why many Japanese came to Berkeley after the war.

In December of the year the war was over I went back to Japan to visit my father who was living in Hiroshima. I took all my children with me and stayed there for 7 years. I sent two children who were highschool age back to America first. Then I came back here, and two years later my wife joined me with 3 children., so the whole family came back here.

Q: Did you think the atmosphere between Japan and America became bad before the war?

A: I think there were times I wondered what will become of us as there were rumors.

Q: How did you feel when you heard that Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I thought it was going to be a big war.

Q: Were you surprised?

A: Of course I was surprised. As soon as the war broke out the feelings of American people became agitated against Japanese. That was natural because Japanese became enemy aliens. Then we were evacuated.

Q: Did you abandon the machinery which you bought?

A: After 3 years the American who was taking care of them wanted to buy them, so I sold them to him for almost nothing.

Q: Wasn't there a confinement order?

A: Yes, there was in Berkeley, also. We could not go out after a certain time in the evening.

Q: What happened then?

A: After a while everything was blocked up and we couldn't work, so we stayed home until the day we evacuated, getting ready to evacuate.

Q: What happened to the money you had in the bank?

A: As soon as the war broke out the banks limited the money we could withdraw from the bank.

Q: Was it just for Japanese?

A: Yes, as Japanese were enemy aliens.

Q: Could you withdraw the money from your savings?

A: Only a limited amount.

Q: Could you write checks anytime?

A: I think we could write up to a limited amount.

Q: Did anybody come to your house to buy furnitures?

A: No. I tried to sell my car and other things. We could not leave the car behind as we had to pack up everything and go to a camp, so I sold the car for almost nothing.

Q: What did you do with your house?

A: I was renting the house, so I just returned it. My neighbor was a Chinese widow with 4 children who were fiends with my children. She was very kind to us. She came and visited us in the camp.

Q: Was she a young lady?

A: Yes, she was.

Q: Which camp did you go to?

A: We went to Tanforan Assembly Center, and then to Topaz, Utah.

Q: What kind of a place was Tanforan?

A: It was a racetrack before, so it was not good. After I went back to Japan I talked ^{with} ~~to~~ my wife that the food in the camp was so plentiful that there was no comparison to that in Japan after the war. We went back to Japan in 1946.

Q: Why did you go to Japan at the worst time?

A: My father was ill. As I was the oldest son I wanted to go home and see him.

Q: You weren't in the "No" "No" group, weren't you?

A: Many people went to Japan as the "No" "No" group, I told my wife that as Christians we should not rebel against the Emperor nor the American government, especially as our children are citizens. I did not sign "No", nor did my wife. But when I said I wanted to go to Japan they let us go.

Q: Did they think you are in the "No" "No" group?

A: They knew we weren't, as we did not write "No" "No".

Q: Did you go to Japan on the same ship?

A: Yes, I went back on the same ship with my children.

Q: Were there many people in the group who believed that Japan won the war?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: How did they act when they arrived in Japan?

A: There was a relation of mine in the "No, No group", but as I believed that Japan lost the war I was not surprised when I went back to Japan.

18

Q: How were some other people on board the ship?

A: When the ship arrived in Uraga and saw Japanese flags flying on some merchant ships, they said, "See, Japan didn't lose the war."

T: I imagine they were disappointed when they arrived in Japan.

S. I think so. I think they were half in doubt as they went home on an American military ship and not on a Japanese ship. They must have thought Japan lost the war.

Q: Going back, how was the life in Tanforan Assembly Center?

A: It was not quite finished yet when we entered it, but in a month or a month and a half all its facilities were completed, and I think we were treated well considering it was in the wartime.

Q: Did you live in barracks?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: Were they lowly?

A: Yes, they were. Our youngest child who was ^{not} a year old ^{yet} had measles. Military personnel came and told us that he could not go to the center with us, and they took him in a military car. In the center he was separated from us, and was put in a hospital ward.

Q: What kind of things do you remember about Tanforan?

A: I don't remember well. It was inconvenient as it was not equipped well. ^WThen it rained we got wet going to messhalls. We could not help it as it was the wartime.

5/12-2

Q: Did you go to Topaz from there?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: How was the life in Topaz?

A: We were used to that kind of life after we went to Topaz. Only the weather was bad as it was in the middle of a desert.

Q: Did you have sandstorms?

A: Yes, we did. Looking back at the life in a desert in Topaz, I think Americans were strict about the health. The food was good, and they were especially good to children giving them milk and other things. While we were in Topaz our oldest daughter had appendicitis. At that time a Japanese doctor came and performed appendectomy.

Q: How old was your son then?

A: During the war he was in a highschool in Japan.

Q: When did he go to Japan?

A: I took my son back to Japan in 1946.

Q: Did he have military obligation?

A: No, not yet. He was only 12 or 13.

~~Q: Did you worry about your children in the camp?~~

~~A: Yes, I did. I sent them to a Japanese school besides American school.~~

Q: Did you worry about your children in the camp?

A: Yes, I did. I sent them to the Japanese school besides the American school. When they went back to Japan they could speak Japanese well. Children in Japan did not go to school much during the war. A teacher said, "Your children are good in Japanese for being in America." As my son was big, the teacher put him in a ^{junior} highschool right away. He graduated from the junior highschool. Among my 3 school age children the oldest graduated from junior high school. The daughter came here after graduating from junior highschool, and the third one attended a year in highschool. When they came here they could read and write Japanese.

Q: Did you children have ^{dual} ~~double~~ citizenship?

A: No, just American citizenship.

Q: Did you regard your children as Americans?

A: Since around that time they couldn't have ^{dual} ~~double~~ citizenship. Those who had ^{dual} ~~double~~ citizenship didn't know that.

Q: So there wasn't any trouble, wasn't there?

A: No, there wasn't. After we went to Japan I worked for the occupation forces as an interpreter. A couple of years after we went to Japan we received American food ration.

Q: Was the ration for you?

A: No, for the children. I had 3 children.

Q: You had a good job, didn't you?

A: Yes, it was pretty good.

Q: Could people who were in "No, No group" work for the occupation forces?

A: No, they couldn't.

Q: If you worked for the occupation forces you did not find it hard to make a living, didn't you?

A: I did not have any special privilege for working in the occupation forces.

Q: But the pay was good, wasn't it?

A: It was pretty good, but we didn't know when we would be discharged. We would have been unemployed if the occupation forces left. Even though the pay was good it was hard to make a living for the family of 5.

Q: Was the rice rationed?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Could you shop in the P.X.?

A: No, we couldn't. We were rationed rice as Americans.

Q: Did you stay in Japan for 5 years?

A: I stayed there for 7 years, and my wife stayed there for about 9 years. She came 2 years after I did, so I got ready during that time. We did not have any savings, so I asked her to wait 2 years while I got ready. I worked hard and send money home. Two years later I had everybody in the family come back here. People who went back to Japan in those days had hard times as it was a bad time.

Q: What year did you come back to America?

A: In 1953.

Q: What did you do after you came back here?

A: At first I worked in a nursery for about 2 years as I had experience. I called my wife, and then worked as a gardener.

Q: Did you work on your own?

A: Yes, I did. I am retired now.

Q: Was your father became ill because of the atomic bomb?

A: No, he didn't. He escaped from atomic bomb but he was ill.

Q: How about your mother?

A: My real mother died early, and my step-mother lived with him for a long time.

Q: How was the gardener's job?

A: I didn't need any capital, all I needed was some tools. It was a suitable job for me.

Q: Are you glad you came to America?

A: Yes, I do. I have been living here since I was 16.

Q: Are your brothers and sisters here?

A: They are all in Japan.

Q: Did you come here alone and sent your father home?

A: Yes, I came here alone.

Q: Did you send money to Japan?

A: Yes, I did for a while after my father went home. I was not the only one. In those days the oldest son had to support the family.

Q: You were the oldest son, but you did not inherit the property, didn't you?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: You had to sacrifice yourself, didn't you?

A: Yes, everybody in those days experienced hardships for the family. Some people sent all their savings to their parents.

Q: Looking back, when was the hardest time for you?

A: It was during the time I supported myself going to school after my father went back to Japan. Another time was the 3 years after we ~~evacuated~~ when the war broke out. We suffered hardships when we went back to Japan a year after the war ended. I had a hard time bringing up 4 children I took back to Japan with me.

Q: Did you regret going back to Japan?

A: Sometimes I did. The life in Japan was poorer than I expected. I could endure it as I was a grown-up, but I was worried what would become of the children's lives.

Q: Was it because you didn't have materials?

A: We didn't have enough food. It was very painful.

Q: Where did you live then?

A: In Miyajima.

Q: Didn't you have vegetables?

A: No, nothing.

Q: Did you go food hunting?

A: Peddlers came to sell food, but sometimes we went food hunting.

Q: What do you mean by Having a hard time while you were in the camp for 3 years?

A: Having no hope is the worst thing for people. We just ate, slept and loafed around. I thought it was not good for the children to be living like that. Life without hope is the worst thing.

Q: Did you work in the camp?

A: I worked as a cook in the messhall.

Q: A Niss'i was beaten up at Poston. Did anything like that happen in your camp?

A: No, there wasn't.

Q: Was the work hard?

A: No, it wasn't too hard.

Q: What was your hobby?

A: I didn't have any. I learned calligraphy a little.

Around the time I came to America some foundations were made as our parents were here. But when our parents came ^{me} here, there were nobody before them, so I think it was hard. When I came here my father was here, so I could depend on him. My father came here at the age of 22 or 23. I am surprised he came ^{here} alone.

Q: When you came here there were many people older than you, weren't there?

A: I was one of the few young men.

Q: There were serious Isseis, but weren't there many Isseis who were dissipated or gambled?

A: Yes, there were. We were only 15 or 16, We did not lead that kind of life as we could not afford to do such thing.

Q: And you had ambition, too, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did. I wanted to get a good job when I got older. The first thing I wanted to do was to learn the language.

Q: Young Yobiyose Isseis were serious, weren't they?

A: Yes, we were. We were only 16 or 17, so we were serious.

Q: Have you seen older Isseis who stayed in the restaurants and gambling houses all the time?

A: I didn't see them. My father used to say to me, "The thing I warn you not to do in America is to live a fast life." He strictly forbid me from gambling. He told me that once I start gambling I cannot succeed.

T: He must seen many people who lived that kind of lives.

S: Many people used to live that kind of lives. As my father was a Christian he was serious. Many people in those days made mistakes by gambling.

Q: Did you ever hear about such people?

A: Yes, I have.

Q: What ^{kind of story} did you hear about them?

A: A man spent all the money he earned in gambling and did not send any money home to his wife and children, so they were in poverty. There were a couple of people like that who came from Miyajima. I heard that from their families, so I was very cautious about such thing. My father and his friend got together and send that kind of a man home.

Q: Were there many Isseis who died single around the time you came here?

A: There were some who died of illness.

Q: There were many who died without getting married, weren't there?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: Were the lives of single ^{more} men ^{around} reckless than that of married men?

A: I don't know such people ^{around} about my age. Most of them are married.

Q: Were your friends all serious people?

A: Yes, they were. I didn't have such friend.

Q: There were many such people among the farmers.

S: Yes, there were.

Q: There were not many such people in town, weren't there?

A: No, there weren't around my age. We could not afford to do such thing. We wanted to study and learn the language, We did not come to America to make a fortune and go back to Japan like the older people did. Of course they wanted to do that because they had their wives and children in Japan. We had parents and brothers and sister in Japan, but once we came here we wanted to have families in the future, so most people of my age lived honest lives.

Q: What kind of stories did you hear about picture brides?

A: I don't know much about them. Two or three years after I came here the law was changed.

Q: Going back to your early days, what did you like most in school? Did you like math, history or something else?

A: I didn't like them.

Q: What did you like best?

A: I liked ethics and composition. I didn't like geography, history or math.

Q: You liked religious subjects, didn't you?

A: The reason I liked religious thing is because my grandmother was a daughter of a Buddhist monk, and used to tell me religious stories. My mother was a Buddhist, and used to talk to me about religious education.

On the other hand, I was timid as my grandmother was too strict with her religious education. Sometimes when I met difficulties I could not cope with it to some extent. I used to think if I did something I would give others trouble.

Q: Did you learn about Ninomiya Sontoku?

A: Of course we did. There was a statue of Ninomiya Sontoku in front of our school in Miyajima. I attended the same school from the first grade in grammar school through the 8th grade, and we bowed ~~when~~ we passed in front of the statue every morning. I liked ethics.

Q: Did your father become a Christian after he came to America?

A: Yes, he did. I didn't know he became a Christian until I came here. There must have been a strong reason for converting from Buddhism to Christianity. I used to ask my father why he became a Christian from a Buddhist.

Q: What did he say?

A: He used to say, "When I became a Christian I found Christianity better than Buddhism. You are lucky that you became a Christian before you became a devout Buddhist, because you did not have much difficulties in converting. It was hard for me to convert after growing up in a Buddhist family, and after having a family of my own."

Q: What kind of a village did you grow up in?

A: As Miyajima was a tourist resort the public morals were not too good. There were many places of entertainment^{so} the surroundings were not good.

Q: Do you mean there were many restaurants?

A: As it was a tourist resort there were restaurants and brothels, so the public morality was nat. good.

T: Maybe that is why your father cautioned you especially.

S: I think my father was serious since he was young.

Q: Do you remember anything that happened when you were young, such as war or earthquake?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: What do you remember?

A: I don't remember the Russo-Japanese war as I was a baby. I remember when Emperor Meiji died, and I remember about General Nogi.

Q: Were there tsunamis? Disaster such as tsunami?

A: No, there wasn't. There were earthquakes often.

Q: What kind of fish were caught there?

A: We could catch small fish. I used to go fishing.

Q: What kind of thing did you do for recreation?

A: We swam in summer. In Miyajima we took nature for a friend.

We had ocean in front and hills behind us. I had gone back to Miyajima 3 or 4 times, but every time I went back there I thought Miyajima was blessed with beautiful scenery. When my friends went back to Japan they used to tell me that the landscape of their villages was bare, but when I went back to Miyajima I was happy the scenery was wonderful. I took my youngest son back to Miyajima with me last April because I wanted him to see my native land while I was alive.

Q: Have you heard about Christianity while you were in Japan?

A: No, I haven't. I remember that some children in the neighborhood brought home picture of Jesus from Sunday schools. At that time I was little.

Q: Were they your neighbors?

A: Yes they were children in our neighborhood. My father called a pastor and founded a church after he went back to Miyajima.

Q: Do you have any recollections of your voyage?

A: No, not much.

Q: Do you have any recollections of the Immigration office?

A: No, not much. I only felt lonesome.

Q: What are some of the pleasant memories of the time when you first came to America?

A: When I first came here I could not understand English and could not do what I wanted, so I felt lonely. I thought I should learn to speak English fast.

Q: Did any funny thing happen?

A: I made mistakes. Between the ages of 16 and 22 I was full of vigor.

Q: Have you ever been homesick?

A: When I first got here I used to get homesick thinking about my mother.

Q: Have you ever been ill?

A: Yes, I have.

Q: Was it because you were homesick?

A: No, as my father was with me 3 to 4 years after I came here.

Q: When did you become ill?

A: I broke my leg by falling off of a bicycle. At that time I was ^{os}hospitalized for nearly a month.

Q: When was that?

A: After my father went back to Japan.

Q: What did you do about the hospital bill?

A: My father's friend who was my guardian paid the bill for me.

Also the white people whom I worked for paid it. They were very kind to me.

Q: Were they very rich people?

A: No, they weren't, but they took good care of me.

Q: How much income did you have around the time you first came to America?

A: Around that time some people paid ^{me} as little as \$5 a month.

Q: Five dollars in those days was

A: I did not need any spending money. I only had to buy school supplies.

Q: How much did good dinner cost?

A: The wage was about 50¢ an hour.

Q: What could you do with \$5?

A: A loaf of bread cost about 10¢.

Q: It was much money, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was. In those days \$50 a month ^{with meals} was a good wages for people who worked in laundries.

Q: Have you ever bought a house?

A: No, I haven't. I bought a house after I came back here. I could not afford to buy a house while I was bringing up 5 children.

Q: Did you belong to the Japanese Association or the Prefectural Association?

A: No, I didn't. I belonged only to the church.

Q: What is your hobby?

A: I do not have any special hobby. Going to church is about the only thing I enjoy.

Q: Have your children ever attend a segregated school?

A: No, they haven't.

Q: Do you have any other recollections about the Depresssion period?

A: The Depression was terrible. We could work only about half a day.

Q: Were you operating a dry cleaning business then?

A: Yes, I was. I worked there at first.

Q: Did you come to America to settle down here?

A: At first I didn't have such intention.

Q: Since when did you decide to settle down here?

A: After a child was born.

Q: Then it was soon after you came here, wasn't it?

A: My first child was born in 1932.

Q: When you had to evacuate did you think American government was unfair to Japanese? Did you feel anger?

A: I did not think so, as we were enemy aliens. Only thing I thought was unfair was that the children who were American citizens had to go to camp, too. But they had to go with their parents.

Q: Did you think Americans were going to kill all the Japanese?

A: No, I never thought so.

T: Some people thought so.

S: There might have been such people.

Q: How did you feel when the evacuation order was out?

A: I thought it had come as I expected.

Q: What did you do with your belongings?

A: I sold all of them.

Q: What did you do with your household goods?

A: We took whatever we could take with us, and left the rest to the Chinese neighbor.

Q: What did you do with big furnitures such as refregerator and gas range?

A: We left them there. People who lived there after us could have used them.

Q: Were the white people kind to you when you left for the assembly center?

A: Yes, they were. Chinese were kind to us, too. They visited us in the camp on Sundays.

Q: You didn't have to worry as your sons were young, but some parents who had older sons worried if their sons should go into service or not. What would you have done if your sons were older?

A: I think I would have told them not to go to war.

Q: Why was that?

A: From religious point of view I think it is not right to kill. Some boys were put in jail for not going into service, and their parents thought it was better that way.

Q: Were they conscientious objectors?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Were there worship services in the camp?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: Did your religious life become better ~~or~~ worse in the camp?

A: As there was no freedom in the camp there was no certainty in religious life. There was no freedom of action or thought, so we did not have freedom in religious life.

S: When one is in the camp and can make a living without any effort, he will lose hope and become spiritless. We become so to speak like slaves. I didn't like that. I didn't like the hopeless life, and I didn't want my children to live hopelessly. I hated nearly 3 years of that kind of life. I thought I couldn't live like that forever. People have to work and cope with hardships. Otherwise they will lose vigor.

Q: When did you leave the camp?

A: I left there in December of 1945, the year the war ended.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: We went back to Japan ^{right} after we left the camp.

Q: Did you think it was good for you and for your children to go back to Japan?

A: I wanted to see my father, but on the other hand I wondered if I was doing so at the expense of my children.

Q: But your main intention was to see your father, wasn't it?

A: Yes, my father and my wife's parents.

Q: When did your mother die? when

A: She died long time ago in her fifties, I was about 24 years old.

Q: Was it before you got married?

A: Yes, before I got married.

Q: Didn't you want to go back to Japan then?

A: When I went back to Japan alone the first time I saw her. She died soon after that. I went back to Japan when I was single at the age of 23.

Q: How long did you stay in Japan then?

A: About half a year.

Q: Was your father here?

A: He was back in Japan then.

Q: Why did you come back to America?

A: I wanted to come back here.

Q: Didn't you want to stay in Japan?

A: I liked it here better.

Q: How long did you stay in America by then?

A: Three years.

Q: Did you like it here better?

A: I thought I should go back to America and do something. My father told me to go back to America and study.

Q: Didn't you have the obligation to support the family then?

A: No, because my parents were still well then.

Q: Weren't you sad when your mother died?

A: Yes, I was. My mother suffered hardships.

Q: When you went back to Japan after the war where did you land?

A: At Uruga.

Q: Was Uruga burnt down?

A: Yes, it was all the way to Hiroshima.

Q: How did you feel when you saw it?

A: I thought the result of the war was miserable.

Q: Were you surprised?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Did you expect that?

A: I didn't expect that it was that bad.

Q: Did you wonder if you could live in such a place?

A: Yes, I did. I worried about feeding the children most.

Q: Were your children given hard times by other children?

A: No, they weren't. I thought if Japan had won the war, our children might have been given hard times, Our children were enrolled in schools as American citizens. In those days allied forces were considered higher than Japanese, so they did not say bad things. As our son in highschool could speak English he served as an interpreter. Sometimes he was asked by the police to interpret for them. They would not slight us if our son help them. I used to tell my children, "Let us do whatever we can for our neighbors."

When I came back from Japan in 1953 I was surprised that the relationship between Japanese and Americans was much better than I expected in Berkeley. I did not expect it to be that good. I was worried if Americans are still not friendly to Japanese, but when I came back here and found out how they were, I thought Americans are great people. I think many Americans died in the war, but they didn't call Japanese "Japs". I thought we should learn from the Americans. If the case was reversed, I don't think Japanese would have been so friendly.

Q: Do you think it is good that the Sanseis are aware of being Japanese?

A: Of course, I think it is good. I tell my children, "Look at the Chinese. They keep the heritage of their parents. Japanese children do not speak Japanese, but Chinese children know their language because the parents teach them at home and the children learn it. They speak their language among the white people. You don't learn to speak Japanese because you are ashamed to speak it among the white people. As long as you think that way you cannot inherit the parents' heritage." I have my grandchildren sent to a Japanese language school as I think they need to learn Japanese in the future. I used to live next door to a Chinese family, so I know them.

Q: What do you think are good points of Japanese people?

A: I think Japanese have strong moral sense. Japanese can distinguish between right and wrong better than other nationalities.

When I talk to young people at church I tell them that when I grew up in Meiji era we learned ethics and learned to distinguish between right and wrong, but they do not teach ethics at schools now. To learn moral is the basic of religion. Sometimes I think what I learned in ethics when I was young did good to me. I don't know what Niseis and Sanseis think when they see "Genji Story" or "Chushingura". It is not good to kill the enemy from Christian point of view, but Bible also teaches to be loyal to the master. I tell my children that they should learn Bushido, and learn to be loyal to their masters.

Q: Do you think it is good to undergo some hardships?

A: Yes, I do. A man cannot endure difficulties unless he has undergone hardships. When I was a schoolboy I found it hard to make a living, so I feel sorry when I see people who are badly pff. I also sympathize with schoolboys who became ill. Unless a ~~man undergoes~~ some hardships he cannot endure difficulties.

Q: What else do you want the Niseis and Sanseis do?

A: I do not associate too many people outside the church, and I don't have time either. Many young people in the church are living with faith. I talk to them, and I think we should bring them up as our successors in the church. I think the lives of Sanseis and Yonseis are getting more difficult.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: They are not as simple as in olden days. Nowadays there is no distinct differences between right and wrong. That is why I feel sorry for them. If you don't have strong determination you will easily go the wrong way.

Q: Do you have any recollections of the past?

A: Hardly anybody who came to America around the time I came are alive. There are only 4 or 5 such people in the church. Rest of them have gone to Heaven. I think they endured hardships and worked for the church and for their friends.